

GOVERNOR'S RANGELAND RESOURCES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (RREC)

The Governor's Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC), thought this would be a great opportunity to introduce ourselves and provide a brief summary of what the Rangeland Resources Executive Committee is all about. RREC is comprised of six ranchers, geographically located across Montana, and appointed by the Governor, to provide direction for rangeland activities. The current members are: Steve Hedstrom, Chairman, Raynesford; John Hollenback, Vice-Chairman, Gold Creek; Les Gilman, Alder; Diane Ahlgren, Winnett; Tracy Hentges, Wolf Point and newly appointed Noel Keogh, Nye. As defined by state law, the purpose of the committee is to recognize the importance of Montana's rangeland with respect to livestock, forage, wildlife habitat, high-quality water production, pollution control, erosion control, recreation, and the natural beauty of the state. The committee works to promote and develop cooperation and coordination of range management activities between persons and organizations, whether private or public and to recognize those who are doing exceptional work in range management. The RREC is committed to working with local conservation districts, range committees, and other producer groups.

RREC co-sponsors three annual events: the State Winter Grazing Seminar, the Governor's Range Tour, and the Montana Youth Range Camp. The State Winter Grazing Seminar rotates throughout Montana and provides a forum for livestock producers to share their experiences and expertise related to rangeland management. The 2008 seminar was held in Sidney, MT and was a huge success with over 150 people in attendance. The Governor's Range Tour also rotates from the western to the eastern areas of Montana. The tour emphasizes the importance of Montana's rangelands and features successful ranchers and land managers. This year's tour will be hosted by the Ruby Valley Conservation District on September 4-5, 2008. The event will be based out of Alder, in the heart of the beautiful Ruby Valley, with the banquet to be held in historic Virginia City. The Montana Youth Range Camp welcomes campers (aged 12-18) and provides them with an appreciation and understanding of Montana's grazing lands. The 2008 Youth Range Camp was hosted by the Treasure County Conservation District in Hysham during the first week of August. Thirty-one campers were in attendance this year and they had the opportunity to learn about rangelands in outdoor classrooms along the Yellowstone River.

RREC promotes and sets guidelines for the Rangeland Improvement Loan Program. This program provides low interest rates to farmers and ranchers for rangeland improvements and development. The current interest rate is 3% and maximum loan amount is \$50,000. For more information, contact Larry Bloxsom, DNRC, (406) 444-6686. The committee advises the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) and suggests priorities of work for Montana's Rangeland Resource Program.



*Rangeland Resources
Executive Committee*